

Building Access for Web-Based Geo-Spatial and Decision Support Systems

EDUCATION/OUTREACH/TRAINING PRE-PROPOSAL

September 3, 2002 DRAFT

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

While tools currently exist that support sound decision-making at the local, state, and watershed level, many local governments, state agencies, and watershed groups are unaware of their existence. Outreach and training to these groups is critical to raise the awareness of the tools, enhance understanding of their value, and promote their use.

ASSETS, GAPS, BARRIERS

Development and implementation of quality education materials and strategies relies on a careful analysis of target audience needs. The education/outreach/training planning effort will include an assessment of resources, networks and organizations that exist to enhance community leader ability to access geo-spatial information and use it for decision-making. The Planning Team will summarize our findings in a report that provides an initial summary of resource/outreach assets, gaps, and barriers that limit use of geo-spatial information by leaders and decision-makers.

The Planning Team will also analyze and report on skills required for the target audience to use current Web-based Decision-Support Systems. The skill assessment will provide the foundation for development of education resources. The Planning Team will plan a dialog with one or more Geospatial Decision Support System experts to develop the skill assessment.

FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

Objectives

1. Increase audience awareness of and access to Internet-based geospatial decision-support tools.
2. Enhance audience understanding of the purpose of geospatial data in managing watersheds and how content is used in creating decision-support tools: What geospatial data is important to watershed management? How is geospatial data gathered? How is geospatial information interpreted or adapted for the decision-support tool?
3. Provide audience with the training and training resources to use Internet-based geospatial decision-support tools: When to use decision support tools? How to use decision support tools? How to interpret results? What question to ask at each stage?

Roles And Responsibilities

Action Plan for 5 years

The workgroup will develop a 5-year action plan to promote and train users on the decision-support tools.

1. Identify audience

The workgroup has identified the following groups who should receive targeted outreach on the decision-support tools:

- local and state government officials
- watershed groups
- University Cooperative Extension – county, regional and state faculty that provide collaboration, watershed, and land use planning expertise for local government and watershed group activities

2. Identify activities

The workgroup has identified the following activities, which would be planned to occur over the next 5 years, to meet preliminary objectives. The first step is to develop and implement a small-group planning team to consist of representatives of each of the target audience groups. The planning team will refine education objectives, determine how to locate and manage content information and experts, develop a sequence and timeline for implementing priority activities, and manage the activities.

ACTIVITIES BY OBJECTIVE:

- a) Increase audience awareness of and access to Internet-based geospatial decision-support tools.
 - Prepare and release a press release to promote EPA's decision-support tools;
 - Prepare and release articles for distribution to stakeholder organizations;
 - Promote decision-support tools on the Local Government Environmental Assistance Network's Web site;
 - Contribute resources to a separate Web site developed by project partners to host or provide links to all of the tools; and
 - Conduct Webcasts to provide demonstrations of available tools. (Webcasts provide a low-cost, convenient medium combining telephone and online technology to deliver educational information. Webcasts feature a live audio discussion accompanied by an online presentation and real-time question-and-answer sessions via the telephone or e-mail. The technology requires no travel, but connects participants via the Internet with presenters and fellow stakeholders.)
- b) Enhance audience understanding of the purpose of geospatial data in managing watersheds and how content is used in creating decision-support tools:
 - Prepare and distribute information materials, including a brochure summarizing all of the available decision-support tools and individual fact sheets on each of the tools;
 - Include geospatial data explanations and information on the new Web site; and
 - Conduct Webcasts to highlight elements of geospatial data and demonstrate examples of individual and layered applications for decision-making purpose.

- c. Provide audience with the training to use Internet-based geospatial decision-support tools:
 - Conduct Webcasts to demonstrate example uses of available tools;
 - Host a region-wide workshops to provide training; and
 - Seek speaking opportunities at other conferences and workshops to showcase uses of decision-support tools.

3. Develop schedule

The workgroup will work with EPA to develop a 5-year schedule for the planned activities.

Action Plan for FY 2003

In FY 2003, the Education/Outreach/Training team will produce five products:

1. A summary of target audience resources and needs.
[Lead – Elaine Andrews, UW Extension]
2. A summary and explanation of education content and skills required by target audience (for use in developing outreach materials and resources).
[Lead – Elaine Andrews, UW Extension]
3. Print and Web site resources to market DSS tools.
[Lead – Andy Seth, ICMA]
4. An introductory Webcast event to introduce DSS tools.
[Lead – Andy Seth, ICMA]
5. A comprehensive five-year outreach and training plan.
[Lead – Elaine Andrews, UW Extension]

Based on the 5-year action plan and dependant on available funding, the workgroup has prioritized the following activities for FY 2003:

a. Identify audience

The workgroup will narrowly define the audience it intends to reach in FY 2003.

b. Identify preliminary activities

The workgroup has prioritized the following preliminary activities for FY 2003:

- Convene a Planning Team to include representatives of groups that participated in the Midwest Geo-Spatial and Decision Support Workshop and potential target audiences;
- Identify model resources for enhancing target audience use of use web-based geo-spatial decision support resources;
- Identify gaps and barriers that limit target audience use of use web-based geo-spatial decision support resources;
- Identify education skills required for target audience to successfully use web-based geo-spatial decision support resources.
- Develop a press release and prepared articles for distribution to stakeholder organizations;
- Produce descriptive materials for use in marketing current web based geo-spatial decision support resources, to include: a 2 or 3 panel brochure and one fact sheet for each DSS resource;

- Develop, promote, and implement a Webcast providing overview of available tools; and
- Promotion through LGEAN

c. Develop schedule

Again, dependant on available funding, the workgroup will establish a schedule to carry out the preliminary activities.